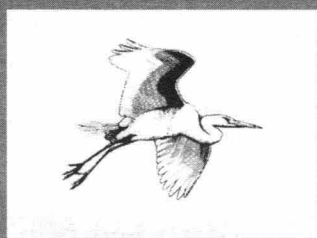


Feather Tale



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Joint Meeting SLAS and WGNSS February 9

Every year our Society gets together with Webster Groves Nature Study Society for a joint meeting. This year, the featured speakers are Cheryl Riley from Audubon Missouri and Judy Allmon from the Missouri Conservation Department. Their presentation will be about the MDC "Grow Native" program.

The meeting starts at 8 p.m. at the St. Louis County Library, located at Lindbergh and Clayton Road, across from Plaza Frontenac.

Join us!

Feb. 16-19

The 4th Great Backyard Bird Count

The National Audubon Society (NAS) and Cornell University Lab of Ornithology are asking families, individuals, classrooms, and community groups to count the numbers and kinds of birds that visit their feeders, local parks, schoolyards, and other areas during any or all of the four count days.

Participants enter their observations at BirdSource: www.birdsource.org, a user friendly website developed by the NAS and the Cornell Lab. This "citizen science" project was first

continued on page 5

We Need Nominations by February 28

Nominate candidates now for St. Louis Audubon Society's Conservationist of the Year, the Robert I. Terry Award, and the Legislator of the Year Award.

Educators--Apply for scholarships for week-long Audubon Ecology camps.

High school students interested in ecology or related fields--Apply for college scholarships.

Contact Julie Leemann, 1004 Sanders Dr., Crestwood, MO 63126, or at 314-962-2093 (evenings).

March 3

Audubon Missouri Meeting

Join Audubon members from across Missouri on March 3, for a conference, "Education for the Next Century," at Tiger Columns, 28 S. 8th St., Columbia. The conference includes John Flicker, CEO of NAS, and Governor Bob Holden. Field trips and slide shows are also planned.

Send your check (\$20 person/\$35 couple) made out to *Audubon Missouri* to Audubon Missouri, 1001 E. Walnut Street, Suite 200, Columbia, MO 65201.

Registration deadline is February 24. Questions? Call: 573-442-2583.

Donations

We welcome donations to the St. Louis Audubon Society in memory or in honor of family and friends. Such gifts honor those we cherish by promoting local conservation efforts. Please send donations to:

St. Louis Audubon Society
c/o Doyle Banks
Treasurer
1161 Quail's Nest
Ballwin, MO 63021.

Name a Scholarship

Many of us would like to be more active in environmentally-oriented activities and feel that we are *doing something* to help further healthy wildlife habitats. A perfect solution to this situation may be to make a donation to SLAS and have a scholarship named in your honor.

We invite Audubon members to consider supporting new scholarship. This is your chance to *do something* for the environment in a relatively easy way.

For more information, please contact board member Lynne Breakstone at 726-4772.

Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published bi-monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 3,000 copies of each issue on recycled paper using soy ink. Ellen McCallie edits the newsletter.

The deadline for the April issue is March 10. Please send photos, articles, events, and letters to Ellen.

e-mail stltalefeathers@yahoo.com
phone 314/966-4131
post 705 W. Essex Ave.
2 St. Louis, MO 63122-3606

Birding Winter

with St. Louis Audubon

By Jim Malone

So far this winter, Short-eared Owls, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Red Crossbills, and Great Black-Backed Gulls have been seen in the St. Louis area. On our last trip to Riverlands, we saw Bald Eagles, Black-legged Kittiwake, Glaucous Gull, Trumpeter Swans, American Black Ducks, and others. Although the bitter cold weather froze the river and most of these birds left, the ice is breaking up and a new group of winter specialties is returning to the area. Join us to find out where the birds are lurking!

February 10 (Saturday) Baldwin Lake, 9:00 AM.

Come visit Baldwin Lake and nearby areas in Southern Illinois. This is a great location for wintering gulls, Snow Geese, Ross's Geese, Loggerhead Shrike, and occasional Rusty Blackbirds. There is also a great variety of waterfowl and native sparrows.

To get there, take I-270 across the Jefferson Barracks bridge to Illinois. Take Route 3 South to Red Bud, Illinois. Turn East onto route 154 and follow it into Baldwin. Watch for signs on the left side of the road directing you to Baldwin Lake. We will meet in the parking lot just inside of the gate.

March 10 (Sat.) Mark Twain NWR, 8:00 AM.

Another great area in early spring to view late wintering waterfowl, gulls, swans, raptors and geese is Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge in Calhoun County Illinois.

This all day trip requires limited walking--dress for the weather and pack a lunch.

To get there, take Route 367 North from I-270 to Alton, Illinois. Turn Left onto route 100 and travel north through Grafton, Illinois. We will meet a couple of miles north of Grafton across highway 100 from the Brussels Ferry. See you there!

March 25 (Sunday) Busch CA, 8:00 AM.

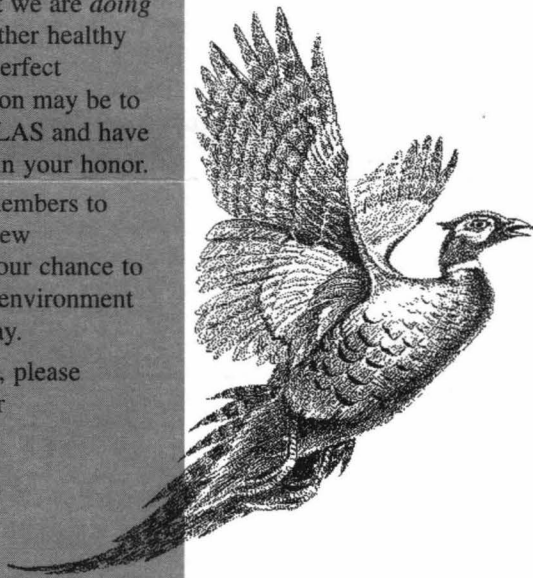
Busch C. A. and the Weldon Springs Lost Valley Area are great places to look for early migrants and wintering birds, such as Pine Warblers, Brown Creepers, Spotted Towhee, Red-Breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches, and Yellow-Bellied Sapsuckers.

To get there, take Highway 40 west across the Missouri River. Exit at Highway 94 and turn left. Go ~S1 mile to Highway D and turn right. Go about 2 miles down D to the entry to Busch Conservation Area. Just inside the gate, turn left and we will meet in the Ayden Knight Hampton Lake parking area.

April 7 (Saturday) Busch CA, 6:00 PM Woodcock Walk/Owl Prowl.

Each spring we venture out in an attempt to see the mating display flights of American Woodcocks. This spring spectacle is something every bird lover should experience at least once in their life. The flights occur at dusk, then we roam around the Busch environs looking for local owls. This annual event has been one of our most popular birding trips each year. Come join us this year, and bring a flashlight!!

Joint SLAS and WGNSS Meeting
February 9 See page 1.



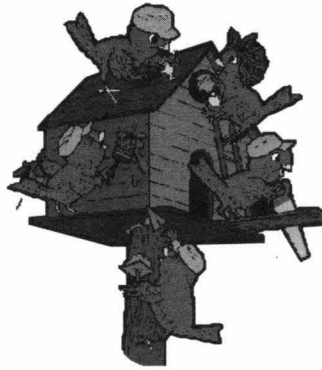
Trumpeter Swans They're Baaaaaack!

By Jim Malone

In the past few years a group of Trumpeter Swans has wintered at Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area near Alton, Illinois. Once, these graceful birds were regular migrants throughout much of the central US, but their numbers plummeted in the late 1800s due to hunting pressure and a serious breeding decline. The last Trumpeter from native populations seen in Missouri was killed in 1900. Beginning in the 1960s, efforts have been made to re-establish the swans in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and even southern Missouri. Although their numbers are growing each year, they are not out of danger yet. The birds seen at Riverlands were released in Wisconsin, and biologists associated with the release program need our help to keep track of their movement. If you see Trumpeter Swans that have numbered neck collars write down the number (and color) of the collar and send the information (with the date seen) to:

Erin Connett
The National Great Rivers Museum
#2 Lock and Dam Way
East Alton, IL 62024
618-462-6979 ext 7805
or toll free 1-877-462-6979 ext 7805
or email at erin.connett@mvs02.usace.army.mil

Finally, please do not feed these birds. Some of them are getting rather tame, and it is important that they do not learn to depend on handouts if they are to make it on their own. To see information about the identification of a number of these swans visit the St. Louis Audubon Society website at www.stlouisaudubon.org.



Help Build Our
Education
Programs!

Buy Audubon
Bird Seed

Order on page 6.

Annual Meeting

By Tom Day

Join us for our Annual Membership Meeting of the St. Louis Audubon Society at Powder Valley Nature Center on April 22, 2001. With the popularity of last year's format, we are planning a similar event, including more of Super Smokers' fantastic and plentiful BBQ! At 12:30 p.m., we will begin informal bird/nature walks led by members of the Society's Board of Directors. Lunch will begin at 1:30 inside the Nature Center.

At 2:45, we will present the St. Louis Audubon Society annual awards--be sure to nominate people now. See page 1.

At 3:00, our guest speakers, Tom Bell, Manager of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and Dick Steinbach, Manager of the Mark Twain National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, will take over. We are excited to have Tom and Dick join us, especially after a \$1 million allocation was recently approved for Big Muddy from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The St. Louis Audubon Society (Karen Goellner) was instrumental in getting this allocation and we look forward to see what is being accomplished in these refuges.

The cost for the meeting (lunch) is \$10. All members of the St. Louis Audubon Society are welcome, but the number of people we can accommodate is not unlimited. To secure your reservation, please send your name(s) and check (\$10/person payable to the St. Louis Audubon Society) to:

Tom Day
29 Frederick Lane
St. Louis, MO 63122-1918.

Feb. 16 to 20 4th Great Backyard Bird Count !

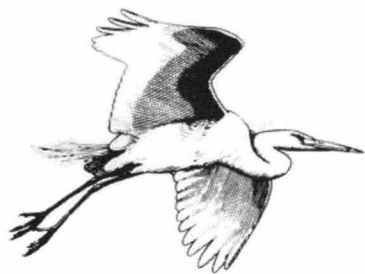
[http://www.birdsource.org/
Res2000.snow.html](http://www.birdsource.org/Res2000.snow.html)



SLAS Seeking Volunteers for Board of Directors

Interested in meeting nice people? Want to help a grassroots organization make its voice heard? Want to participate in interesting educational opportunities? Then maybe The St. Louis Audubon Society is in your future. We have positions open on our Board of Directors and we would like to have new faces participate in planning our chapter's future. If you are interested, please contact Mary Dueren, evenings, 314-576-1473.

Did you know SLAS gives awards to citizens? See page 1.



Audubon's Karen Goellner Big Muddy Refuge Receives \$1 Million

By Jim Holsen

Too often we forget that things get done by people. The following is an excellent example of the difference that one person can make. It is also a lesson in what Audubon chapters can accomplish "for birds, other wildlife and their habitat."

The Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, consisting of parcels of wetlands along the lower Missouri River between Kansas City and St. Louis, was established in September 1994, shortly after the disastrous flood of '93. Many bottomland farmers were anxious to retire or relocate their operations and emergency appropriations were available for the purchase of damaged floodplain lands. Initially, 16,000 acres were authorized for the refuge, but that was increased to 60,000 acres about a year ago. Land was acquired from willing sellers only.

The National Audubon Society, working with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, plays an important role in selecting refuges for which Congress will appropriate funds for land acquisition. In the fall of each year, National Audubon asks its chapters to nominate refuges in greatest need of funds for land acquisition. National Audubon and the Fish and Wildlife Service, the agency managing the refuges, then select those refuges most in need of funding. A well designed brochure describing each refuge is prepared and presented to Representatives and Senators. In the springtime and through the summer, National Audubon and the local chapter responsible for the nomination lobbied Congress for necessary appropriations.

Funds for land acquisition for national parks and wildlife refuges come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which congress has set aside for that purpose. This fund, derived from royalties that the federal government receives from off-shore oil well drilling, amounts to about \$900 million annually, but in recent years Congress has appropriated only about \$100 million for land acquisition. (A comprehensive bill setting priorities for the use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for conservation and wildlife preservation was passed by the Congress earlier this year—a bill that will in the future provide money for parks and for state departments of conservation, as well as for refuges.)

On the Senate side, Missouri's Senator Kit Bond is chairman of the subcommittee that handles appropriations for the Department of the Interior, which includes the Fish and

Wildlife Service. Therefore, Senator Bond is influential in deciding which refuges are funded.

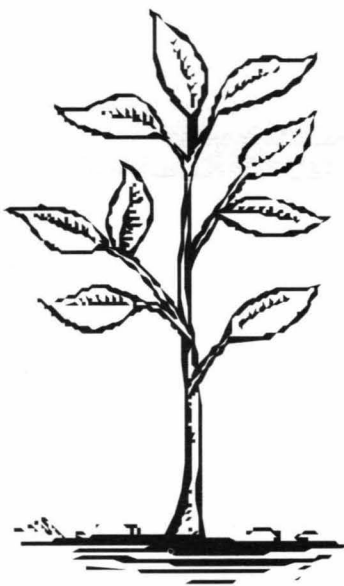
In Missouri there are other complicating factors. Some Missourians are opposed to allowing the federal government to purchase more land than it presently controls. In each of the last two sessions of the General Assembly, bills were introduced that would have expressly forbidden the federal government to purchase additional lands, including tracts for the Big Muddy Refuge, without the approval of the state legislature.

While these bills did not pass, the one introduced last spring made a surprise comeback in the hectic final days of the session and could well have been attached to some other bill at the last minute. Who would have thought that Missouri citizens would object to expanding a wildlife refuge in the floodplains along the Missouri River!

St. Louis Audubon nominated the Big Muddy and the nomination was accepted in 1998, 1999, and again this year. Congress rejected the requested appropriation in 1998 and again in 1999. This year, however, Karen Goellner, a board member of St. Louis Audubon, volunteered to shepherd the appropriations request through Congress. Karen worked

closely with Brian Klippenstein, Senator Bond's aide for wetlands. An indication of success came earlier this year when Senator Bond's staff phoned Tom Bell, the refuge manager, to discuss his needs. Karen said her task was to keep a smiling face on the other side of the telephone. For whatever reason, Karen's powers of persuasion were successful and this year's appropriations bill, signed recently by President Clinton, includes \$1 million for land acquisition for the Big Muddy. That is \$1 million that would not be there except for Karen's persistence.

Tom Bell says that he expects to have the money in his Big Muddy account by the time this newsletter is published.



Friends of St. Louis Audubon Society

The St. Louis Audubon Society (SLAS) is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society (NAS). By paying your annual dues, you are a member of both SLAS and NAS. In the past, NAS has shared a portion of your annual membership dues with affiliated local chapters in order to promote common objectives on a local basis. Due to changes at NAS, the amount of your dues we receive is being reduced significantly. This creates a new challenge for the St. Louis Audubon Society.

Our Education, Conservation and Program committees have all undertaken new initiatives to expand and improve the effectiveness of our local activities. You have already read about some of these activities in *Tale Feathers* and there are more on the way. The Board of the St. Louis Audubon Society is committed to the implementation of these initiatives and is determined to get the necessary resources for their success.

As part of that effort, the Board has established a recognition program, *Friends of the St. Louis Audubon Society*. Recognition levels are as follows:

Great Blue Heron	\$125+
Great Egret	\$75-124
Snowy Egret	\$50-74
Little Blue Heron	\$20-49



We hope you share our commitment and will contribute to show your support of our local activities.

The St. Louis Audubon Society is a not-for-profit organization [501 (c) 3] and contributions are tax deductible as permitted by law. Please make your checks payable to 'St. Louis Audubon Society' with a notation *Friends of SLAS*. Mail to Doyle Banks, Treasurer
St. Louis Audubon Society
1161 Quails Nest Road
Ellisville, MO 63021



Notes from Our President

By Mary Dueren

I know how the winter doldrums can set in. The holidays are over and the decorations are put away and it seems there is nothing to look forward to.

I have a recommendation or two. First, drive to Alton, Winfield or Clarksville and check out the Eagles. This is a fantastic time of year for viewing these winter visitors. Drive up the Great River Road for even more viewing opportunities. Then have lunch at Pere Marquette State Park Lodge. Or, drive up Highway 79 to either Winfield Dam or Clarksville Dam. If you go to Clarksville for Eagle Days, be sure to stop in at St. Mary's Church for the homemade soup and pies. The eagles will be here for a while. Spring might be a long way off but getting out will definitely lift your spirits.

Wish List

1. Volunteers needed for hospitality committee.
2. Binoculars for kids.
3. Volunteers for International Migratory Bird Week or our Speakers Bureau. Call Vicki Flier at 968-9166.
4. A stamp collection appraiser.

If you think you can help, give me a call any evening: Mary Dueren 314-576-1473.

Let's Get the Rats--Not the Raccoons and Owls

(Editor's note: I misplaced the author's name. I apologize.)

The one thing a lot of us have in common is our love of birds. I have been feeding the birds for 20 years, since my mother started me on my journey in the 1960s. I remember the war on rats back then, and currently in my yard, it is still being fought. We live within 100 yards of a creek and, therefore, have the perfect habitat for all sorts of critters. I love seeing foxes and am still amazed to see coyote in the Kirkwood/Webster area. Last year I had three pileated woodpeckers at one time in my wooded backyard. But when I see the rats I draw the line. The battle begins. The first year we had them my next door neighbor put out a bait box with D-Con, but this kills the raccoons that eat the rats. (I found a dead raccoon the following winter in the woods.) While I was crying over the unnecessary death my neighbor quipped, "In the war on rats there is going to be collateral

damage." I cried more. The following year the screech owl, that had been almost a family member for four years in back, disappeared. "More collateral damage," my neighbor said. I cried again. It had been so nice making coffee every morning while making sure the owl was still in residence.

The next year when the rats appeared we called St. Louis County Vector Control. Mike was very understanding when I told him I didn't want critters dying because of the rats. That was when I learned about bromethalin, a neuro-toxin. Vector control has a list of poisons and their primary and secondary toxicity on mice, rats, dogs and cats. Bromethalin is a one time neuro-toxin that won't travel through the food web.

Alas, I could fight the rats and not have secondary poisoning in my backyard. Now in the fall I stock up on this neuro-toxin because I know that by November, I will have the pesky little rodents trying to grab their share of the bird's food. OK Hatchery in Kirkwood across from the Farmer's Market on Argonne carries some products with bromethalin including Assault.

Order by: Feb. 18

Send your **check (payable to St. Louis Audubon)** to:

Vicki Flier
18 Algonquin Woods
Glendale, MO 63122-2013

Questions? Call:

Vicki Flier: 314/968-9166
Ellen McCallie: 314/966-4131

Pick-up

Fri., Feb. 23, 6:30-7:30 pm.
Sat., Feb. 24, 9:30-10:30 am.

Essex Parking Lot
Kirkwood High School
801 W. Essex, Kirkwood

From Manchester Rd. and Lindbergh Blvd., which becomes Kirkwood Rd., go about one mile south to Essex Ave. Turn right (west). Go one mile to parking lot. We are located by the east fence. Look for our smiling faces!



This form makes you a member of **both** National and St. Louis Audubon.

Please support your local chapter. Use this form to join or renew.

St. Louis Audubon Society Membership Form

Audubon is a membership organization dedicated to protecting birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Our members are the source of our volunteer strength and the foundation of our financial support. By becoming a member, you will receive National Audubon Society's magazine as well as the St. Louis Audubon Society newsletter, *Tale Feathers*.

Membership category desired:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Introductory/\$20 | ☐ Individual/\$35 |
| ☐ Sr. Citizen/\$21 | ☐ Sr. Citizen Family/\$23 |
| ☐ Family/\$40 | ☐ Sustaining/\$50 |
| ☐ Supporting/\$100 | ☐ Other (_____) |

Send a check made out to
National Audubon Society to:
P.O. Box 220227
St. Louis, MO 63122

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

N01 7XCH

Missouri Environmental Fund Joins Earth Share

By Jim Holsen

In the past few years, St. Louis Audubon has received several thousand dollars in donations through the Missouri Environmental Fund (MEF), which functions as a statewide environmental United Way. Donations have not been as large as had been expected, however, primarily because the MEF has had a difficult time gaining access to the payroll giving campaigns of those few corporations with the largest numbers of employees

This problem is not peculiar to MEF. Nationally, the United Way campaign has been successful at keeping state environmental funds out of corporate giving campaigns. Corporate CEOs are enlisted as Board Members of local United Way campaigns in order to keep others out of their corporate payroll giving campaigns. By contrast, MEF has found it much easier to be included in the Combined Federal Campaign, for federal employees, and in state and local governmental campaigns, since these campaigns must be open to organizations other than United Way.

Earth Share is an environmental fund on the national scale, similar to MEF on the state level. Earth Share has about 40 organizational members, all major environmental organizations, including the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and The Sierra Club Foundation. Earth Share has had better success than the state environmental funds in gaining access to corporate giving campaigns, but still its success has been limited to relatively few companies.

For several years Earth Share and an association of state environmental funds have been working towards a merger agreement. Following a vote this past November, it now appears that an affiliation agreement will take effect early in 2001. The Missouri Environmental Fund will change its name to Earth Share of Missouri and will become affiliated with the National Earth Share organization.

Annual (BBQ) Meeting

April 22, 2001

Powder Valley Nature Center

See page 3.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2000-2001

St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
Kirkwood, MO 63122
Phone: 314-822-6595

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VP Conser.	Joe Eades	314-966-3171
VP Finan.	John Solodar	314-862-5294
Treasurer	Doyle Banks	636-227-5389
Secretary	Christy Beckmann	314-822-2428

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Bill Brandhorst	314-965-7269
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Jerry Miller	314-389-3969
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Dale Ponce	636-394-6011
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Mark your calendar now!

April 22, 2001

Annual Spring Meeting/Banquet

Powder Valley
Nature Center

Bird Seed Sale

Order by Feb. 18.

Pick up Feb. 23-24.

Your purchase funds St. Louis
Audubon educational programs!

Audubon Missouri Meeting

March 3
Columbia, MO

See page 1.

Joint Meeting with WGNSS

Grow Native

Feb. 9. See page 1.

St. Louis Audubon Society

100th Anniversary of Birding

May 4th, 5th, 6th 2001

Contact Paul Bauer at
314-921-3972.

